of Ramayana period could be evolved so that exclusive excursion of four to five days' is conducted for foreign and domestic tourists; and

(c) whether such "spiritual tourism" could be replicated later on covering epics like Mahabharat, Dhampada (Buddhism), Adi Granth, (Sikhism) etc.?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATIAMBIKA SONI): (a) During the South Asia Tourism and Travel Exchange held in Delhi from April 18-20, 2008, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Board has distributed CDs and brochures promoting destinations related to Ramayana trail in Sri Lanka.

(b) and (c) Identification, development and promotion of tourist places is primarily undertaken by the concerned State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. Ministry of Tourism, however, provides financial assistance to States/Union Territories for development of tourist destinations/circuits including places of spiritual tourism based on proposals received from them in accordance with scheme guidelines subject to availability of funds and inter-se priority. During the Tenth Five Year Plan, 151 tourism projects were sanctioned for Rs. 42867.93 lakh for development and promotion of religious/spiritual places. During 2007-08, 32 projects for Rs. 10807.80 lakh have been sanctioned for such places.

Ministry of Tourism promotes tourism products of the country including spiritual tourism through its publicity campaigns in the print, electronic and outdoor media. Information is also disseminated through the website, brochures and posters and by the India tourism offices in the country and abroad.

Focus on water utilization

3839. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

whether 2007 was declared as Water Year by the Centre, despite the fanfare with which Government set out to focus on water utilization;

whether the other alarming trend in the current year has been that the concern over climate change hogged all the limelight, probably at the cost of water as a priority issue;

what proposals Government plan in the Eleventh Plan to include water quality issue under a chapter on environment and climate change; and

what concrete measures the draft policy has proposed during the Eleventh Plan period for water?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Government of India had declared the Year-2007 as "Water Year" with the focus on developing consensus on appropriate measures including legislation on better management of the water sector including participatory irrigation management, regulated use and conservation; timely completion of irrigation projects and maintenance of existing projects to ensure water availability to fanners; awareness programmes for the masses; organization of conferencs, workshops on important development and management issues etc.

During the Year, 2007, various activities were undertaken by the Ministry of Water Resources which include campaign on conservation of water, organizing of mass

awareness programmes and water management & training programmes, demonstrative recharge projects, institution of a National Water Award and Bhoomijal Samvardhan Puraskars, holding of meeting of the 'Artificial Recharge of Ground Water Advisory Gouncil, organization of National Congress on Ground Water, Farmers Participatory Action Research Programmes (FPARP), release of Postage Stamp on the subject of Water, participation in festivals, fair and mass awareness programmes etc..

(c) and (d) The subject of water quality is already included in Chapter 9 — Environment and Climate Change of Eleventh Plan Document (Volume I), which was discussed in the 54th Meeting of the National Development Council.

Drinking water for urban and rural areas

3840. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

whether Government has initiated any study on the requirement of water for household purpose including drinking water in urban and rural areas of the country in future;

if so, the details thereof including the quantity of water available at present and the future requirements;

whether it is forecasted that huge water scarcity will grip the country in future both in the urban areas and rural areas; and

if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard during the last three years and proposed to be taken in near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Urban Development have informed that the Ministry of Urban Development has not initiated any study on the requirement of water for household purpose including drinking water in urban and rural areas of the country. However, the National Commission for Integrated Water Resources Development Plan (NCIWRDP) in its report has projected the estimates of total annual water requirements for various scenarios. As per the report of NCIWRDP, the total annual water requirement for the year 2050 for domestic and municipal use have been worked out to be 90 billion cubic metre (BCM) in low demand scenario and 111 BCM in high demand scenario.

(c) and (d) The arange annual precipitation is estimated as 4000 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) in the country. After accounting for the natural process of evaporation etc., the average annual water availability in the country is assessed as 1869 BCM. It is estimated that owing to topographic, hydrological and other constraints, the utilizable water is 1123 BCM which comprises of 690 BCM of surface water and 433 BCM replenishable ground water resources. 629 BCM of water is being utilized for diverse purposes.

With a view to optimally utilize the available resources, several measures for development and management of water resources are undertaken by the respective State Governments which include creation of storages, restoration of water bodies, rain water harvesting, artificial recharge to ground water and adoption of better management practices etc. Storage capacity of about 225 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) has been created so far. As per present assessment, the total estimated storage capacity of the various projects under construction is about 64 BCM. Further, the State Governments have identified various other